



... second electrode layers disposed above the magnetic domain control layers;

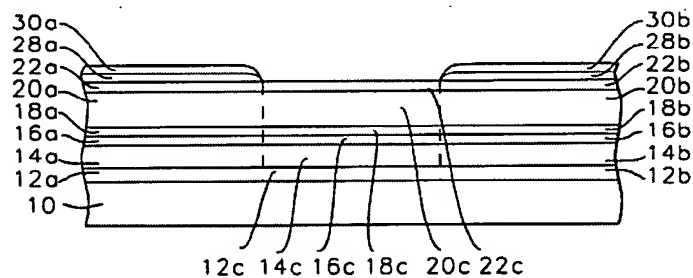
an upper gap layer disposed above the second electrode layers and the stack of layers;

... wherein a width in a track width direction between the first electrode layers is smaller than a width in a track width direction of between the second electrode layers.

Claims 1-6 and 17-18 stand rejected as obvious based upon U.S. Patent No. 6,383,574 to Han et al. ("the Han patent"). These obviousness claim rejections are overcome as follows.

As a threshold matter, the Examiner is respectfully reminded of a first requirement to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness: "the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations." (MPEP 2143). Here, the Han patent fails to teach or even suggest a magnetic head structure having first and second electrodes oriented in the manner claimed.

In the latest office action, the Examiner repeatedly relied upon Figure 4 (reproduced in part below) of the Han patent as teaching the claimed embodiments.



Specifically, the Examiner cited layers 22a, 22b as corresponding to the claimed first electrode layers, and layers 30a and 30b as corresponding to the claimed second electrode layers.

However, careful inspection of FIG. 4 indicates that layers 30a and 22a, and layers 30b and 22b respectively, are coextensive with one each other. There is no teaching, or even suggestion here, that a width in a track width direction between first electrode layers, be smaller than a width in a track width direction of between second electrode layers. Rather, by failing to employ the claimed configuration of the first and second electrodes, the sensor structure of the

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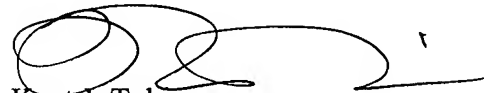
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Han patent would be expected to experience a low sensitivity region on the both sides of the non-ion implanted regions of a free layer due to the magnetic bias layers.

Based at least upon the failure of the Han patent to teach or suggest each of the elements of the pending claims, it is respectfully asserted that no conclusion of obviousness can reasonably be drawn from this reference. Continued rejection of the pending claims is therefore improper, and the claim rejections should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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